

The Mountain Lion of the Rocky Mountains

Bailey Puls, age 9

Presidio School • Ms. Cohn

Grand Prize–Art–Category 2

*This book is dedicated to 2016 Living River of Words
Teachers of the Year:
Susan Cohn – Presidio School
and
Robert Mayer – DeGrazia Elementary School*

*And all the teachers and parents/guardians that promote and support
the integration of science and the arts while creating opportunities
for children to connect with nature.*

Living River of Words 2016 – 2017 Traveling Exhibit Schedule

April 16 – May 30, 2016

Wheeler Taft Abbott Sr. Branch Library • 7800 N. Schisler Dr.

June 4 – July 6, 2016

Agua Caliente Park – Ranch House Art Gallery • 12325 E. Roger Rd.

July 9 – July 31, 2016

Martha Cooper Branch Library • 1377 N. Catalina Ave.

August 2 – August 31, 2016

Murphy-Wilmot Branch Library • 530 N. Wilmot Rd.

September 2 – September 30, 2016

Joel Valdez Main Library • 101 N. Stone Ave.

October 2 – November 11, 2016

Dusenberry-River Branch Library • 5605 E. River Rd., #105

November 15, 2016 – January 9, 2017

Mission Branch Library • 3770 S. Mission Rd.

January 11 – February 5, 2017

Valencia Branch Library • 202 W. Valencia Rd.

February 7 – March 10, 2017

Quincie Douglas Branch Library • 1585 E. 36th St.

Living River of Words: Youth Arts and Science

Living River of Words (LROW) sets the stage for learning, inspires science inquiry, and excites creativity. The cycle begins with teachers who invite *LROW* arts and science instructors to their classrooms. Students are introduced to the concept of watersheds and study wetland habitats through a multi-disciplinary series of science investigations and the practice of poetry and visual arts. After exploring these topics, children ages 5–19 have the opportunity to share their impressions with entries of poetry and/ or visual art to *Living River of Words: Youth Poetry and Art Contest*. In these pages you see the award winning youth poetry and art works that are the result of the field trips, school residencies, and independent study.



Photo: Dominic Flores

Living River of Words is a regional coordinator providing local support for the national River of Words. Several dedicated teachers in Pima County, Arizona brought their classes on outdoor excursions to the Santa Cruz River or spent a day by the pond at Agua Caliente Park to learn about watersheds and wetlands habitats.

Our field study sites – the lower Santa Cruz River and Agua Caliente Park

Thanks to the release of highly treated wastewater into the riverbed the Santa Cruz River in northwest Tucson and Marana, the river is alive with perennial flows, lush trees lining the river banks, and diverse wildlife. Effluent in this reach of the Santa Cruz River is not new; two wastewater treatment plants have been operating on this section of the river since the 1970s. What has changed is the quality of the effluent being released. Pima County recently completed the upgrade of the two wastewater treatment plants. The upgrade significantly improved the quality of water released into the river, a key ingredient for a healthier river. The river now attracts walkers, bikers, and is a popular birding destination from the Sweetwater Wetlands to the



Photo: Doris Evans

Marana Flats. The Living River Project aims to gauge conditions of this valuable ecosystem and track the impacts of our community investment. *Living River of Words* plays a role in the broader Living River Project by introducing students, teachers and parents to the lower Santa Cruz River. While at the river students conduct water quality tests, record wildlife sightings, and survey riparian vegetation, using methods that

mirror the Living River Project indicator assessments. A visiting poet or artist spends time with the students by the river to guide their journaling and drawing in preparation for poetry writing and artwork back in the classroom.



Photo: Gladis Miranda

Pima County's Agua Caliente Park offers a natural spring and pond teeming with life. Situated at the base of the Santa Catalina Mountains, Agua Caliente Park is a popular destination for bird watching or a family picnic by the pond.

The education center at the park offers amenities for the student field study trips. As with the Santa Cruz River study site, while at the park on a *LROW* field study trip the students take water samples from the pond to conduct water quality tests and study under the microscope. They also spend time journaling, sketching and recording their observations to inform their poetry writing and art work.

Perhaps you too will feel the richness and wonder of these special places through the eyes of the *Living River of Words 2016* award winning youth poets and artists.

We thank the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Pima County Regional Flood Control District, Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department, Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation, Pima County Communications Office, Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation, The Friends of Agua Caliente Park, and individual community donors for funding the Living River Project. This partnership made possible the continuation of the environmental science, poetry, and art residencies for students to prepare entries to the *Living River of Words: Youth Poetry and Art Contest*.

Thank you!

Many thanks to the community partners, school administrators, teachers, science, poetry and art instructors, judges, and graphic designers that worked diligently to bring *Living River of Words* through the annual cycle of activities: Yajaira Gray, Wendy Burroughs, Jeffrey Babson, Sandy Reith, Julie Strom, Gavin Troy, Carolyn King, Doris Evans, Rebecca Seiferle, Kimi Eisele, Josh Schachter, Brian Powell, Bret Muter, Leia Maahs, Randy Metcalf, Gerry Loew, Edie Price, Helen Wilson, and NRPR interns Esperanza Zepeda, Selena Madrigal, Arturo Valdenegro, and Nikolas Espinosa.

The Tortoise and The Rattlesnake

The rattlesnake is fighting
with a tortoise in the rain.
He likes to eat eggs.
He is standing up.
He has scary eyes.
He smells with his tongue.

Joel Amavizca, age 6
Holladay Elementary School • Ms. Martin
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 1

Everything is Running Down

Everything is running
down the path of the moonlight
in the earth's sleep.
The fast hours run down the stream.
The doves dream.
Everything is running
down the path of moonlight;
the ducks, turtles and toads.

Troy Chabot, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary School • Ms. Gwozdz

I Am

I am the river going through the flow of life
I am an otter swimming with my kids and wife
I am the moss on the wall
I am the river cane about to fall

I am a fly about to die sitting on the road
I am a hawk swooping down to eat a horny toad
I am a kid learning about the water cycle
Watching the flow of life go by like a bicycle

Isaiah J. Montoy, age 11
Ochoa Community Magnet School • Ms. Elvick

Used to Be

Water flows.
Plants grow.
Birds alight on branches.

Convenient lies disguising an inconvenient truth.
The faded memory of a river.
A river that brought life
now an empty wash.

We chose lawns and swimming pools.

We complain that the river is gone.
We pump water back into the land but only after we have used it.

But water is not a river.
Airplanes are not birds.
Being alive is not living.

A promise to return what we have taken.
A fated apology to the land.

We are child knocking over a towers of blocks.
We scream and cry when the blocks fall.

We try to build the tower up again but it is never the same.

But children learn.
We are learning.

Perhaps next time we will leave the tower standing.

Hannah Providence, age 16
City High School • Ms. Acosta
Grand Prize – Poetry – Category 4

Jackrabbit

Fire-red ears
Beige fur
Yellow eyes
Curved whiskers
Drinks the melting snow

Adam Mohamed Omar Makram, age 6
Sewell Elementary School • Ms. Martin

The White Green River

The white green river
gribbles like a gravel into a pool –
wsshhh!
I see the small green leaf
and say, “Hello!”
I see a bumpy leaf
swooshing into a pool –
wsshhh!
The black beetle walks
around in the smooth, smooth sand.

Christian Rubio, age 9
Borton Magnet School • Ms. Cavazos
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 2

Sparkling Water

Drifting through our world
During the rise of day and the show of night
Through cracks of our dry desert land
To care for every living creature

Alexie Gonzalez, age 10
Mesquite Elementary School • Ms. Collins

Wish Washer

The river washed my wishes away,
Where did they go?
Did they go to the tourist,
Who is watching the hawk?
Did it go to the hawk,
Who is stalking his prey,
Who jumped the bushes?
Did it go to the bush,
Who provides yummy berries for the birds?
Did it go to the bird,
Who landed right in front of the little girl?
Did it go to the little girl,
Who was wondering where her wish went?

Victoria Holloway, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary School • Ms. Mirlocca
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 3

A Summer Rain Storm

On a bright summer morning
The clouds started blowing strongly in the wind
to say a storm was coming.
The rain started plip plopping on the pond
as if there were lots of rocks being flung into the water.
The rattlesnake silently slithered into a rabbit hole
to seek shelter and to have a tasty snack.
After the rain everything was still.
The saguaro had its drink.
The rivers were full.
The puddles were thick.
The storm was over as
the animals came out hiding.

Addyson Keeling, age 9
Bloom Elementary School • Ms. Martin

Gambel's Night

It was a stormy night,
rain drops falling, lightning striking
and clouds swiftly moving around the sky.
Gambel's Quail was wearing his feathery hat.
Rain was pouring on him
because he forgot his black and white coat.
He ran until he bumped into Spanish Scorpion.
Scorpion found a palo verde tree and
invited Gambel into the cavity of the trunk.
They stayed there for the night.
In the morning the sun was shining
at the circle shaped rainbow.

*Violeta Fernández, age 8
Sewell Elementary • Ms. Martin*

Rain

A coyote
Danced in the rain
During the monsoon
Up in the mountain
To cool off

*Riley Blute, age 10
Mesquite Elementary School • Ms. Collins*

The River

The river sounds
Like a bird tweeting
It smells like mint
The air blooms into
The flowers. The flowers
are blooming and floating

*Giselle Cardenas, age 8
Borton Magnet School • Ms. Cavazos*



Hummingbirds in the Rain

*Elizabeth Crandell, age 7
Henry Elementary • Ms. Martin*



Beautiful Lands

Anmalina Whillock, age 6
Roadrunner Elementary • Ms. Carroll
Grand Prize–Art–Category 1



Magnificent Mountain Lion

Christian Jack Badinger, age 8
Erickson Elementary • Ms. Martin



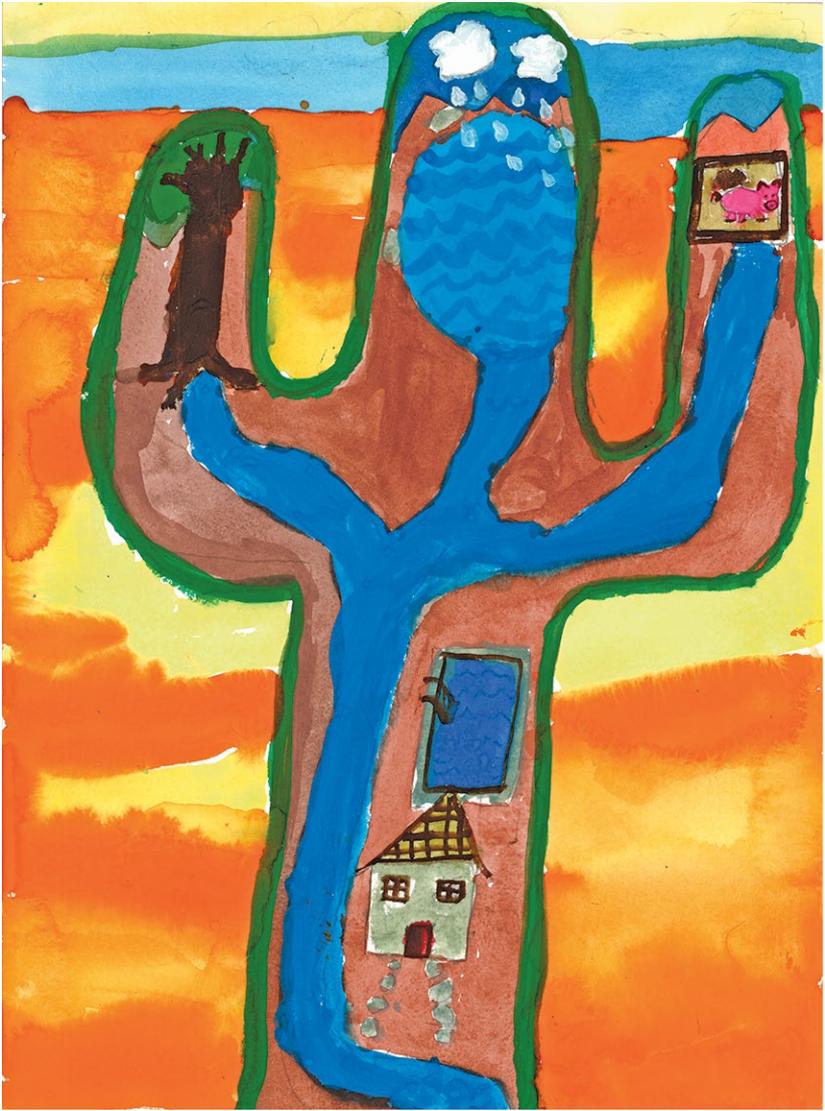
Turtle Desert Land

*Jonah Alcaraz, age 8
Presidio School • Ms. Powers*



Bird's Eye View

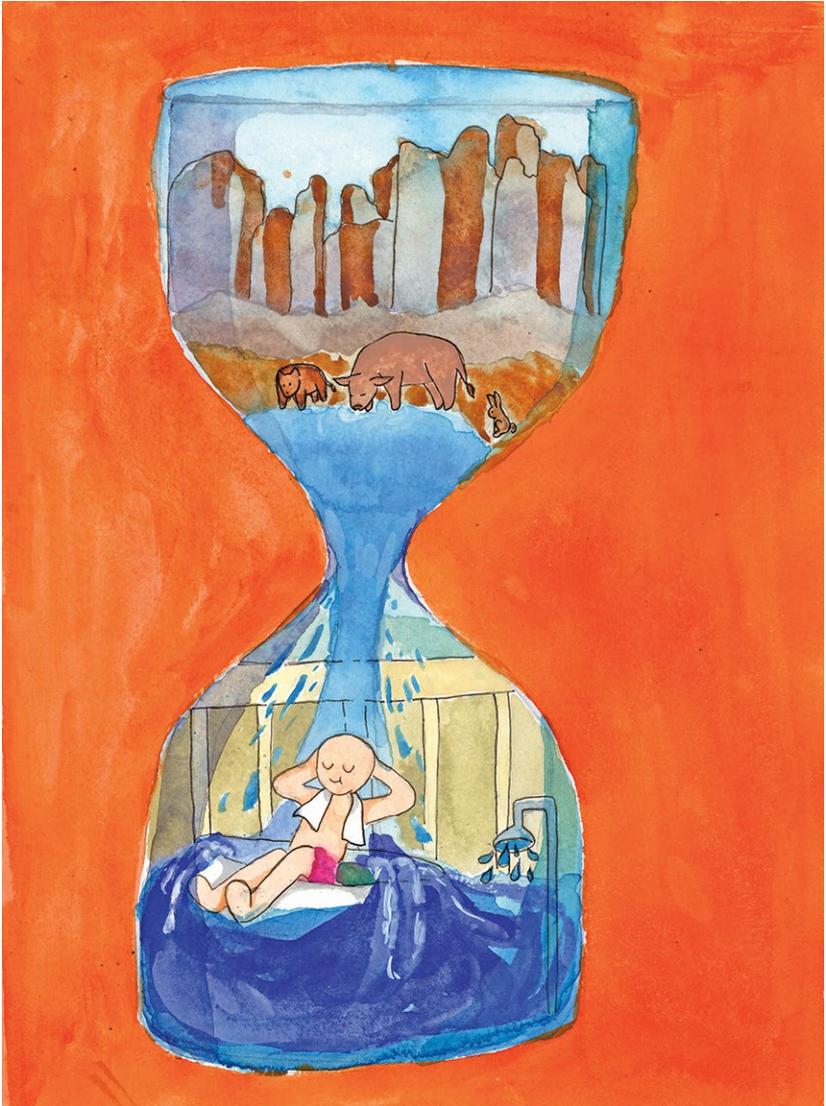
*Eduardo Lemus, age 18
Amphitheater High School • Ms. Hollman
Grand Prize–Art–Category 4*



Water in the Desert

Daniel Yom, age 7

Manzanita Elementary • Ms. Green

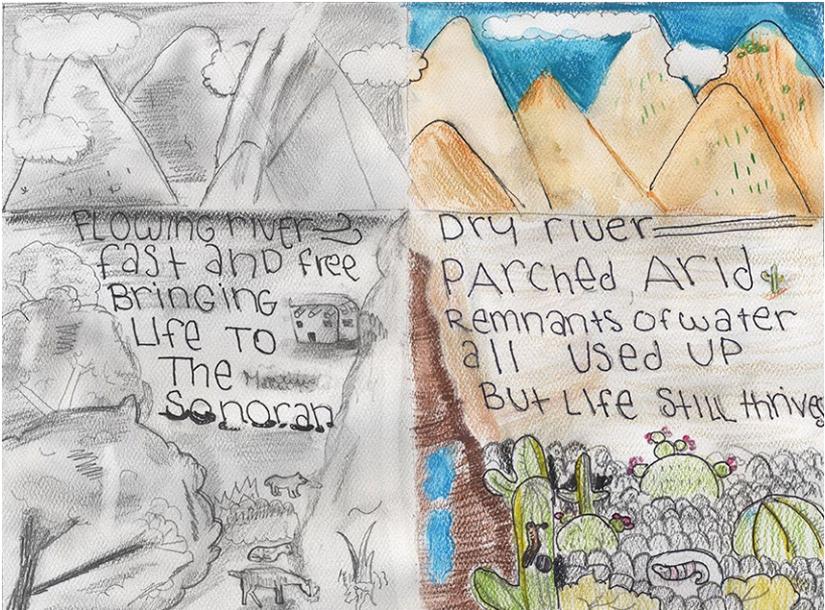


The Limited Water Resources

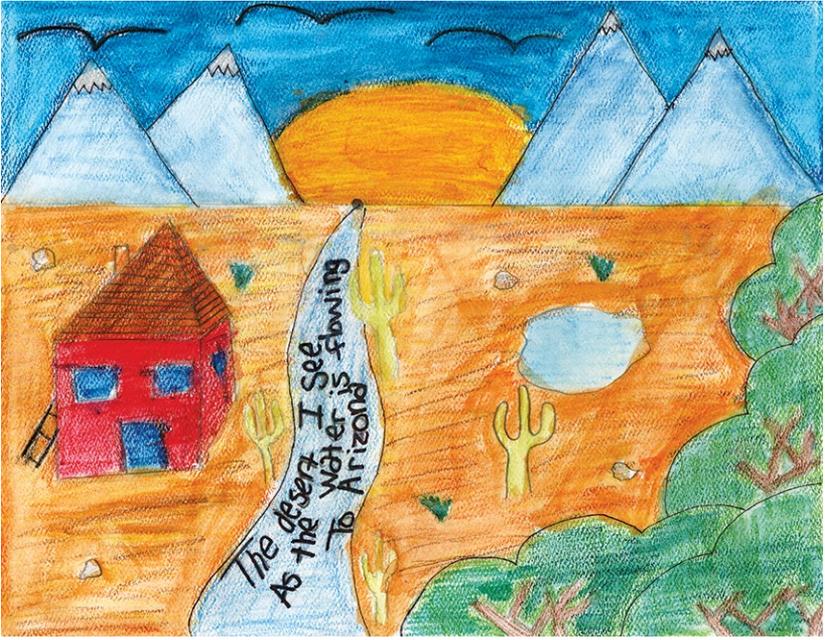
*Hannah Bae, age 14
Basis Oro Valley • Ms. Yom*



Desert Animals
 Ela Sainz, age 7
 Gale Elementary • Ms. Nguyen



Disappearing Water
 Gayatri Kaimal, age 10
 Basis Tucson North • Mr. McDonald



Living River of Words Project

Bivika Adhikari, age 10
Basis Tucson North • Mr. McDonald



Beautiful Desert

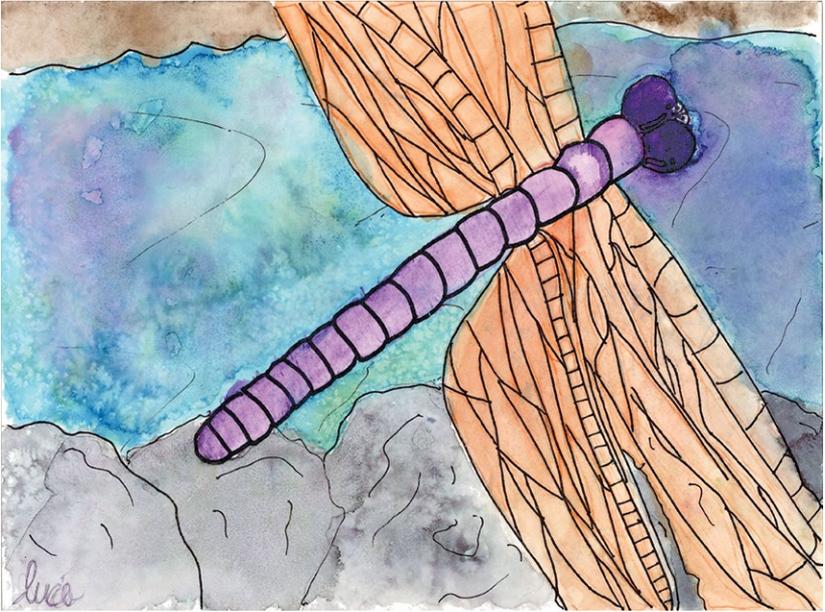
Kira Anderson, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary • Ms. Gwozdz



Curious Owlets
Gospava Conley, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Minninger



Desert Beauty
Jayden Dwight, age 8
Presidio School • Ms. Cohn



Misty Wings

Lucia Meinig-Reeves, age 11
Paulo Freire Freedom School • Ms. Mohr-Felsen
Grand Prize–Art–Category 3



Bio Cycle

Klay Leh, age 16
Amphitheater High School • Ms. Hollman



Cold Winter Morning

Vanessa Mora, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Mr. Mayer



Sunset Scavenger

Raine Ugstad, age 11
Paulo Freire Freedom School • Ms. Mohr-Felsen



Waiting

*Jocelynn Garcia, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca*



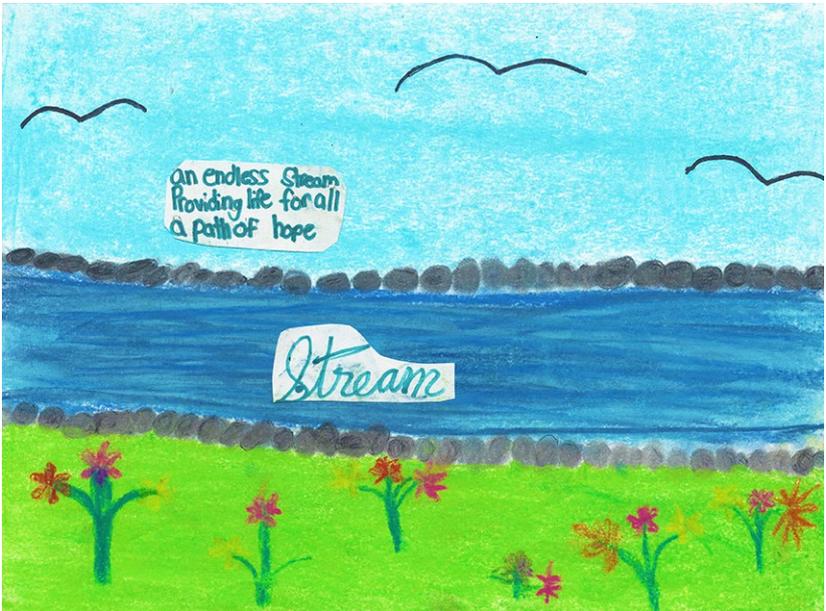
River Bird

Lucas Knoll, age 8
Presidio School • Ms. Cohn



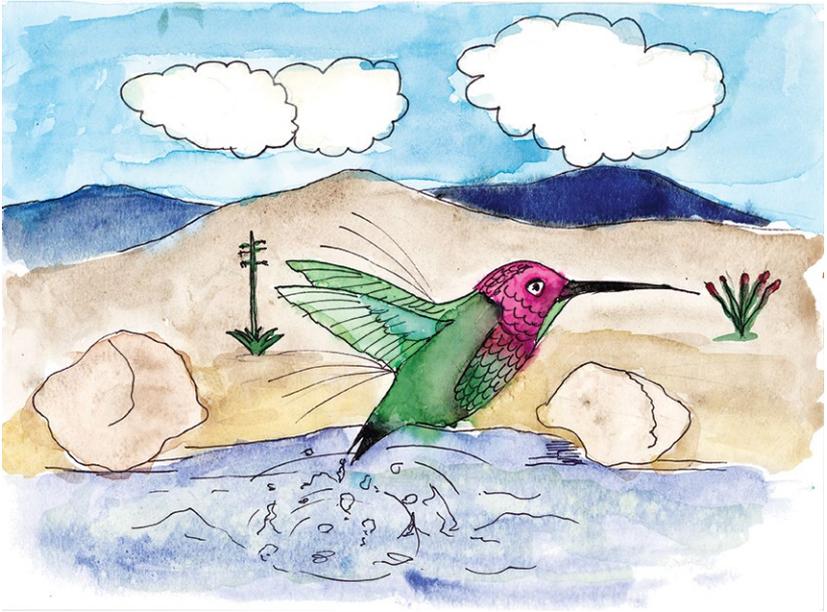
Desert Rain

Madilyn Hanna, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Mr. Mayer



Stream of Hope

Malya Hersha, age 11
Basis Tucson North • Ms. Vonier



Myles Walker, age 12
 Paulo Freire Freedom School • Ms. Mohr-Felsen

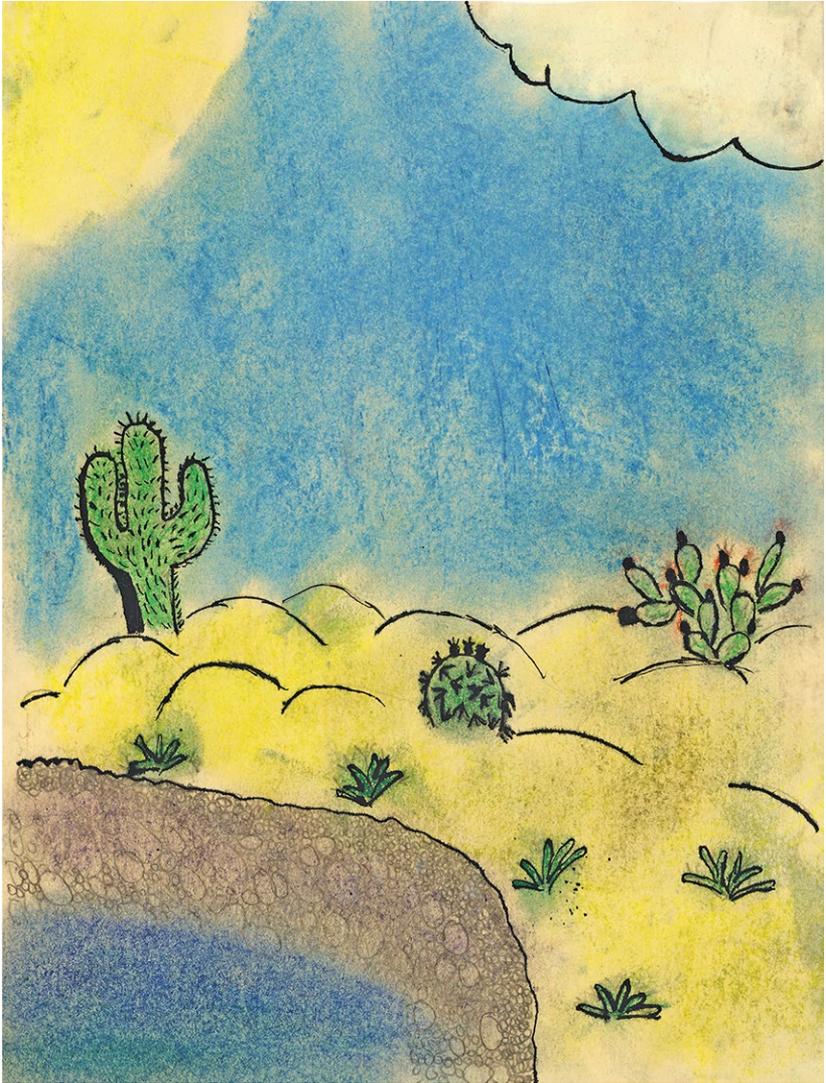


Desert of Life
 Renee Li, age 10
 Basis Tucson North • Mr. McDonald



Desert

*Rebeca Contreras Cortez, age 8
Presidio School • Ms. Powers*



The Watering Hole
Simone McCarthy, age 10
Basis Tucson North • Ms. Vonier



Colorful Desert

Alicia Romero, age 8

Agua Caliente Elementary • Ms. Johnson



The Desert and the River

Stella Xu, age 8

Presidio School • Ms. Cohn



Gabriel Mahtapene, age 11

Hollinger K-8 • Ms. Denson

Grand Prize–Photography–Category 3



Jesus Peña, age 11
Hollinger K-8 • Ms. Denson



Samantha Brownell, age 11
Hollinger K-8 • Ms. Denson

Katydid

I found a leaf
I found a leaf but something was moving
The legs on the leaf moved
it was a katydid
it had six legs
it was walking on a stick
it was an insect
it was green
I think it eats plants
I touched the katydid
It was walking on my palms

Ba`ag Wilson, age 8
Borton Magnet School • Ms. Cavazos

I Am the River

I am the river with no pain
No sorrow
Swimming with an otter
Providing with my mother
And my long line of rivers
Waiting to be the best
At what I do
I sleep under a blanket of stars
With the moon as a light
To guide me through my day
And a cloud as a pillow
I sleep dreaming of one day
Being a swirl of stars
A universe of water
A graceful leap of water
There is no limit to what I can be
As long as I believe

Zaxarie Silva, age 10
Ochoa Community Magnet School • Ms. Elvick

River

One sunny morning I looked out the window
and saw a river
Water had shining rocks
I wanted to keep the rocks
so I decided to make my own river
and it had shining rocks and crystals
and I took the rocks from the other river
I got a shovel to make my own river
I wanted to make a river to show my family
How cool my river will look like
If my river could talk it would say
Please take of me

Jasmine Bernal, age 9
Ochoa Community Magnet School • Ms. Selden

The Gila Monster

As the long venomous Gila monster
slowly crawls out of his hole,
he sets out to find a lake of water to drink from.
While the saguaro protects his house,
he safely leaves his babies behind with
the protection from the tall green prickly cactus.
As he gets through the rocky plain,
he finds a diamondback snake who took over the lake.
He fights off the snake, takes a drink and leaves.
When he gets back to his hole,
which was protected by the trustworthy cactus,
he sees his babies alive and awake.

Abraham Alvarez, age 10
Sewell Elementary School • Ms. Martin

Shivering Trees

Rain is like air, is like an owl.
The mountains look like fire.
Deep in a dream,
the perfect hawk
will close eyes to sleep
and sings
to the river trees.
Shivering clear together.

Ivy Morrison, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary School • Ms. Johnson

The Finch

He climbs the sky
to see himself fly
To see the river and the wind
it was for him
He was free to be all his life
his wings to the wind
as a knife
River robbed the sky of colors
his life was like no other
He felt like he was brave and free
but was he only trying to flee
The ground from which
he broke free
As he whistled a song on the breeze

Briant Johnson, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Mr. Mayer

The Desert Owl

The desert owl in the sunny morning
was very hungry and quickly glided to a nearby saguaro.
The saguaro was holding lots of water from the desert rain.
The clouds started to come in and made the curvy ground
look like water from the ocean splashing, splish, splash.
The flowers in the distance were blue and white
and looked like butterflies and berries.

*Aaliyah Thomas, age 10
Bloom Elementary • Ms. Martin*

The Storm

The cliff is so still,
 one day you will see it in your eyes.
When monsoon comes
 the trees will move,
 it will be windy.
 Discover it.
One day you will have
 the courage to do it.
When it is night,
 you will see an owl.
You will have the owl
 in your dreams.
Over the night,
 imagine that owl
in that thunderstorm.

*Drew Hartigan, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary School • Ms. Johnson*

The Owl

The wind howled in the night sky.
Bright yellow eyes shone in the darkness.
Watching...
Every scurry of living things is observed.
Wings flap as it takes flight in the wind.
Hooting a call to its mate nearby,
Scattering...
of mice and rodents on the run.
The Rattlesnake stays coiled next to the saguaro.
Perched up high, above, the ever watchful owl...
Waiting!

Jocelynn Garcia, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary School • Ms. Mirlocca

The Desert Tortoise

In the stormy night the desert tortoise,
protected by his coated shell, floated into a waterfall
Kaboom...He fell landing with his head inside
his shell, surviving just by a little.
He slowly walked in the wet night back to his den.
The next morning the flowers grew,
and the weeds washed away.
It was a perfect day.
Wiggly worms and cautious curious caterpillars
could be seen in every direction.

Allie Vogelsberg, age 8
Sewell Elementary School • Ms. Martin

The Whispering Wind

I hear the wind whispering,
to the willow trees,
telling them the stories,
of everything she's seen.
I hear the wind whispering,
to the river reeds,
bragging about every city she's seen.
If you look closely at the water's edge,
the midges are squirming and butting heads.
Why can't we just open our eyes a little longer?

Madilyn Hanna, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary School • Mr. Mayer

The Great Saguaro

As a tiny Elf owl sits on my arm
the wind howls throughout the desert
Whish! Wooo! Swish!
He awakens to the sound of a scorpion
scurrying along the sand
Scratch! Scratch! Scratch! Scratch!
I stand tall in the moonlight
forming an eerie shadow
as a bat drinks my nectar
A bobcat prowls around me
bolting into the moonlight
A pack of coyotes howls Awooo! How!!
The wind sways
and rocks the leaves of the mesquite tree
Whish! Wooo! Swish!
The sun ascends above the desert,
day is nearing

Sara Gorny, age 9
Manzanita Elementary School • Ms. Fisher



Photo: Doris Evans

For more information about *Living River of Words: Youth Arts and Science* contact:
Pima County Natural Resources,
Parks and Recreation
Environmental Education
Phone: (520) 615-7855
Email: eeducation@pima.gov
Website: www.pima.gov/nrpr

All of the Living River Reports and associated documents for the lower Santa Cruz River are available for download at the Sonoran Institute website www.tiny.cc/lscr



Shaping the Future of the West
www.sonoraninstitute.org



parks in focus
Utdall Foundation

*U.S. Environmental
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